UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/52/628/Add.7
11 December 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-second session
Agenda item 97 (g)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Second Committee (Part VIII)*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 97 (see A/52/628, para. 2). Action on sub-item (g) was taken at the 38th and 50th meetings, on 12 November and 9 December 1997. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/52/SR.38 and 50).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS A/C.2/52/L.17 AND REV.1

2. At the 38th meeting, on 12 November, the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Women in development" (A/C.2/52/L.17) which read:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 50/104 of 20 December 1995 and all other relevant Assembly resolutions on the integration of women in development, and also the resolutions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women on the integration of women in development,

* The report of the Committee on this agenda item will be issued in several parts, under the symbol A/52/628 and addenda.

"Reaffirming that gender equality is of fundamental importance for achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development,

"Recognizing the significant contribution that women make to economic activities and the major force that they represent for change and development in all sectors of the economy, especially in key areas, such as agriculture, industry and services,

"Aware that the continued discrimination against women, their continued lack of equal access to education and training and credit facilities, and their lack of control over land, capital, technology and other areas of production impede their full contribution to, and opportunity to benefit from, development,

"Recognizing that discrimination in education and training, hiring, remuneration, promotion and horizontal mobility practices continues to restrict employment, economic, professional and other kinds of mobility for women striving to reach their potential,

"Reaffirming that investing in the development of women and girls has multiplier effects on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth,

"Recognizing that the difficult socio-economic conditions that exist in many developing countries, particularly in Africa and the least developed countries, have resulted in the rapid feminization of poverty, especially in rural areas and among female-headed households,

"Reaffirming that women are key contributors to the economy and to combating poverty through both remunerated and unremunerated work at home, in the community and in the workplace, and that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty,

"Recognizing the adverse impact of structural adjustment programmes on women, especially in terms of cutbacks in social services, education and health and the removal of subsidies for food and fuel,

"Aware that, although globalization and liberalization processes have created employment opportunities in some countries, they have also created risks and increased the marginalization of developing countries, particularly with regard to women,

"Recognizing that the informal sector is a major source of entrepreneurship and employment for women in developing countries and that its important contribution should be included in labour-force statistics and standard national accounts,

"Expressing its concern about the virtual absence or poor representation of women in economic decision-making, including the formulation of monetary and fiscal policies and rules governing pay,

"Emphasizing the promotion of programmes aimed at financial intermediation with a view to facilitating and increasing rural women's access to credit and to agricultural inputs and implements and, in particular, to easing collateral requirements for access to credit by women,

"Stressing that the lack of a family-friendly work environment, including appropriate and affordable childcare and inflexible working hours, further prevents women from achieving their full potential,

"Stressing that neglecting a gender perspective in policy formulation and implementation exacerbates the feminization of poverty and economic inefficiency and has a high social cost,

"Noting the importance of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, particularly the funds and programmes, in facilitating the advancement of women in development,

"1. Reaffirms the urgent implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action[1] and the relevant provisions contained in the outcomes of all other major United Nations conferences and summits;

"2. Stresses that a favourable and conducive international and national economic and financial environment and a positive investment climate are necessary for the effective integration of women in development;

"3. Calls upon all Governments and all actors of society to implement the commitment made in Beijing to create an enabling environment through, inter alia, removing discriminatory barriers and ensuring the full and equal participation of women in economic activities through, inter alia, the adoption of gender-sensitive policies and legal measures and the provision of other necessary structures;

"4. Also stresses the importance of developing national strategies for promoting sustainable and productive entrepreneurial activities to generate income among disadvantaged women and women living in poverty;

"5. Urges Governments to develop and promote methodologies for incorporating a gender perspective into all aspects of policy-making, including economic policy-making;

"6. Stresses the need to ensure full and equal access for girls and women to education, vocational training and retraining programmes for improving their employment opportunities;

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[1] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

"7. Urges all Governments to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources and to increase women's access to credit by instituting innovative lending practices, including practices that integrate credit with services and training for women and that provide flexible credit facilities to women, in particular rural women, women in the informal sector, young women and women who lack access to traditional sources of collateral;

"8. Invites Governments to undertake legislation and administrative reforms to give women equal rights with men to economic resources, including access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, credit, inheritance, natural resources and appropriate new technology;

"9. Requests Governments to ensure that women's priorities are included in public investment programmes for economic infrastructure, such as water and sanitation supply, electrification and energy conservation, transport and road construction and to promote greater involvement of women beneficiaries at the project-planning and implementation stages to ensure their access to jobs and contracts;

"10. Urges Governments to promote and strengthen micro-enterprises, new small businesses, cooperative enterprises and expanded markets and other employment opportunities; to facilitate, where appropriate, the transition from the informal to the formal sector, especially in rural areas; to provide outreach programmes to inform low-income and poor women, particularly in rural and remote areas, of opportunities for market and technology access; and to provide women with assistance in taking advantage of such opportunities;

"11. Calls upon Governments to develop strategies aimed at promoting sustainable and productive entrepreneurial activities for income-generation among disadvantaged women and women living in poverty;

"12. Calls upon Governments to ensure, through legislation, family-friendly work environments and to promote the facilitation of breast-feeding for working mothers;

"13. Urges the international community, the United Nations system and other relevant organizations to give priority to supporting the efforts of developing countries to ensure the full and effective participation of women in deciding and implementing development strategies, through, inter alia, women's increased access to health care, capital, education, training and technology, and wider participation in decision-making;

"14. Urges multilateral donors, international financial institutions and regional development banks to review and implement policies in support of national efforts to ensure that a higher proportion of resources reach women, in particular those in rural and remote areas;

"15. Calls upon the United Nations system to provide adequate resources for operational activities in order to support developing

countries in their efforts to integrate gender concerns into national programmes and to implement those programmes;

"16. Requests the United Nations development system to work towards establishing a more coherent approach to its support for women's income-generating activities, in particular credit schemes;

"17. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session a sub-item entitled 'Effective mobilization and integration of women in development';

"18. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its fifty-fourth session on the outcome of the implementation of the present resolution and to cover in his report the impact of the globalization and liberalization processes on the integration of women in development and the implementation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system in enhancing the participation of women in national development programmes."

3. At the 50th meeting, on 9 December, the Committee had before it a revised draft resolution entitled "Women in development" (A/C.2/52/L.17/Rev.1), submitted by the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.17.

4. At the same meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Hans-Peter Glanzer (Austria) made a statement (see A/C.2/52/SR.50).

5. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Luxembourg (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), the United States of America, the United Republic of Tanzania (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China) and the Russian Federation (see A/C.2/52/SR.50).

6. At the same meeting, at the request of the representative of the United States of America, the Committee voted on draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.17/Rev.1, which was adopted by a recorded vote of 153 to 2 (see para. 8). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia,

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining: None.

7. After the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of Luxembourg (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Namibia, Morocco (also on behalf of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Yemen, Sudan, Oman, Bahrain, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan, Qatar, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Mauritania), the Syrian Arab Republic and Australia (see A/C.2/52/SR.50).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

8. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Women in development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 50/104 of 20 December 1995 and all other relevant Assembly resolutions on the integration of women in development, and also the resolutions and the agreed conclusions[2] adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women on the integration of women in development,

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[2] Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 7 (E/1997/27), chap. I, sect. C.1, agreed conclusions 1997/3.

Reaffirming the Beijing Platform for Action[3] and the outcome of recent major United Nations conferences and summits,

Reaffirming that gender equality is of fundamental importance for achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development,

Recognizing the significant contribution that women make to economic activities and the major force that they represent for change and development in all sectors of the economy, especially in key areas, such as agriculture, industry and services,

Concerned that the continued discrimination against women, the denial or lack of equal rights and access to education, training and credit facilities, and the lack of control over land, capital, technology and other areas of production impede their full and equal contribution to and equal opportunity to benefit from development,

Recognizing that discrimination in education and training, hiring, remuneration and promotion, and horizontal mobility practices continue to restrict employment, economic, professional and other opportunities and mobility for women and impede women in achieving their full potential,

Reaffirming that investing in the development of women and girls has multiplier effects on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth,

Recognizing that the difficult socio-economic conditions that exist in many developing countries, particularly those in Africa and the least developed countries, have resulted in the acceleration of the feminization of poverty, especially in rural areas and among female-headed households,

Reaffirming that women are key contributors to the economy and to combating poverty through both remunerated and unremunerated work at home, in the community and in the workplace, and that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty,

Recognizing the continued need to review the impact of structural adjustment programmes in order to reduce any adverse impact on women, especially in terms of cut-backs in social services, education and health and the removal of subsidies on food and fuel,

Aware that although globalization and liberalization processes have created employment opportunities for women in some countries, they have also created risks to and marginalization of women in developing countries,

Recognizing that the informal sector is a major source of entrepreneurship and employment for women in developing countries and that data collection on its important contribution should be improved,

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[3] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

Expressing its concern about the poor representation of women in economic decision-making, including in the formulation of monetary and fiscal policies as well as rules governing pay,

Emphasizing the promotion of programmes aimed at financial intermediation with a view to ensuring rural women's equal access to credit and to agricultural inputs and implements and, in particular, to easing collateral requirements for access to credit by women,

Stressing the need for a family-friendly work environment, including appropriate working hours, affordable childcare and flexible working hours, and emphasizing the principle of shared responsibility between women and men for the achievement of gender equality,

Stressing that neglecting a gender perspective in policy formulation and implementation exacerbates the feminization of poverty and economic inefficiency and has a high social cost,

Noting the importance of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, particularly the funds and programmes, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, in facilitating the advancement of women in development,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General and the recommendations contained therein;[4]

2. Calls for the urgent implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action[3] and the relevant provisions contained in the outcome of all other major United Nations conferences and summits;

3. Stresses that a favourable and conducive international and national economic and financial, political, social and legal environment and a positive investment climate are necessary for the effective integration of women in development;

4. Reiterates its call to all Governments and all actors of society to implement the commitment made at Beijing to create an enabling environment through, inter alia, removing discriminatory barriers and ensuring the full and equal participation of women in economic activities through, inter alia, the adoption of gender-sensitive policies and legal measures and the provision of other necessary structures;

5. Also stresses the importance of developing national strategies for promoting sustainable and productive entrepreneurial activities to generate income among disadvantaged women and women living in poverty;

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[4] A/52/345.

6. Urges Governments to develop and promote methodologies for mainstreaming a gender perspective into all aspects of policy-making, including economic policy-making;

7. Stresses the need to ensure that women and girls have full and equal access to all levels of education, vocational training and retraining programmes in order to improve their employment opportunities;

8. Urges all Governments to ensure women's equal rights with men and access to economic resources, and to increase women's access to credit by instituting innovative lending practices, including practices that integrate credit with services and training for women and that provide flexible credit facilities to women, in particular rural women, women in the informal sector, young women and women who lack access to traditional sources of collateral;

9. Invites Governments to undertake legislation to ensure that women have equal access to and control over land, unmediated by male relatives, in order to end land rights discrimination, that women are accorded secure use of rights and are fully represented in the decision-making bodies that allocate land and other forms of property, credit, information and new technologies, and, in the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action, that women are accorded full and equal rights to own land and other property, inter alia, through inheritance, that land reform programmes begin by acknowledging the equality of women's rights to land and that other measures are taken to increase land availability to poor women and men;

10. Requests Governments to ensure that women's priorities are included in, and that women fully participate in, decisions on public investment programmes for economic infrastructure, technology, water supply and sanitation, electrification and energy conservation, transport and road construction, and to promote greater involvement of women beneficiaries at the project planning and implementation stages to ensure their access to jobs and contracts;

11. Urges Governments to promote and strengthen micro-enterprises, new small businesses, cooperative enterprises, expanded markets and other employment opportunities; to facilitate, where appropriate, the transition from the informal to the formal sector, especially in rural areas; to provide outreach programmes to inform low-income and poor women, particularly in rural and remote areas, of opportunities for market and technology access; and to provide women with assistance in taking advantage of such opportunities;

12. Calls upon Governments to promote, inter alia, through legislation, family-friendly and gender-sensitive work environments and also to promote the facilitation of breastfeeding for working mothers;

13. Urges the international community, the United Nations system and other relevant organizations to give priority to assisting the efforts of developing countries to ensure the full and effective participation of women in deciding and implementing development strategies, through, inter alia, women's increased access to health care, capital, education, training and technology, and full and equal participation in decision-making;

14. Urges multilateral donors, international financial institutions and regional development banks to review and implement policies in support of national efforts to ensure that a higher proportion of resources reach women, in particular women in rural and remote areas;

15. Calls upon the United Nations system to support developing countries in their efforts to integrate gender concerns into national programmes and to implement those programmes, including by providing adequate resources for operational activities for development;

16. Calls upon the United Nations system to integrate gender mainstreaming into all its programmes and policies, including in the integrated follow-up of United Nations conferences, in accordance with the agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997;[5]

17. Requests the United Nations development system to continue working towards establishing a more coherent approach to its support for women's income-generating activities, in particular credit schemes;

18. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the sub-item entitled "Women in development";

19. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session a report on the outcome of the implementation of the present resolution, including the impact of the globalization and liberalization processes on the integration of women in development, the implementation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system in enhancing the participation of women in national development programmes and the gender mainstreaming of United Nations programmes and policies.

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[5] A/52/3, chap. IV, para. 4.